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The Plunderers' Dilemma

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Abstract and Keywords

As a boy, Conaire was fostered alongside three sons of the plunderer Donn Désa; as a king, his duty was to stamp out plundering in his realm. The saga exploits the potential for pathos and dramatic irony in this situation, and this chapter examines how it stages their parallel and mutually destructive careers. Particular attention is paid to the pact between Conaire's foster-brothers and the renegade British prince Ingcél, which parallels Conaire's pact with the Otherworld examined in chapter 2. Conaire and his foster-brothers face impossible choices between their hereditary obligations and their ties of foster-kinship, and in a manner reminiscent of Greek tragedy they are repeatedly compelled to reaffirm their choices against their will. Such repetition may draw on variant sources, but has been orchestrated to achieve real dramatic effect. The twin dilemmas thus presented build up a powerful sense of tension in the first half of the saga.

The Plunderers' Dilemma

At an unspecified point in Conaire's reign, his foster-brothers decide to go their own way in defiance of his rule. They engage first in robbery and then in the full-scale plundering practice known as *díberg*. In a wide range of mediaeval Irish sources, *díberg* is referred to as a form of piracy characteristic of the wild and rootless life led by groups of adolescent and adult males who do not qualify for full membership of settled society. Such a group was known as a *fían* (plural *fíanna*) and its individual members as *féindidi* or *fénnidi*. As Kim McCone has shown, the *fían* was a recognized social institution in early mediaeval Ireland, with analogues in other late antique and early mediaeval cultures.[1] However, its legitimacy came under intense criticism from churchmen. In hagiography and sagas about saints, *díberg* is spectacularly demonized as a malignant relic of heathenism.[2] According to them, its practitioners were pure evildoers, bound to each other in *uota mali* ('pledges of evil') and sometimes also bound to Satan himself. Sporting *signa diabolica* and frightening hairstyles, they prowled about in bands, murdering ecclesiastics, burning churches, and generally behaving extremely badly.

By the late Middle Irish period, this demonizing perspective was balanced by a more positive portrayal of hunter-warriors in poems and sagas relating to the great *fían*-champion Finn mac Cumaill, one of the best-known figures from later Middle Irish and Early Modern Irish saga literature.[3] The later sagas involving Finn, set during the reign of King Cormac mac Airt, typically stress not only the pleasures of hunting and the wild life, but also the cooperative relationship which often (p.83) prevailed between king and *fían*. The more sinister forms of *díberg* tend to be downplayed, and tales such as *Acallam na Senórach* ('The Conversation of the Elders') explicitly dissociate the proto-Christian *fénnid* from the aggressively heathen *díbergach* or plunderer.[4]

Both positive and negative images of the *fían* were available to the author of the *Togail*. At first glance the saga appears to side wholly with the clerics. Whereas Finn and his *fían* are

often represented protecting King Cormac's realm against foreign invaders,[5] the sons of Donn Désa are themselves invaders who seek to destroy the king. West and other scholars have identified a powerful strand of anti-*díberg* polemic within the *Togail*, which begins as soon as Conaire's foster-brothers begin their plundering (thus causing one of Conaire's *gessi* to be violated for the first time):

> Trí .lll.[6] fear doib in tan bádar oc faelad i Crích Conacht occa múnud, condad-acca muicid Maine Milscothaig íat, 7 nín-acca riam a nisin. Luid for teichead.[7]

> There were three fifties of them when they were wolfing in the territory of Connacht during their training, and one of Maine Milscothach's swineherds saw them, and he had never seen that before. He fled.

This is no ordinary juvenile delinquency: the text refers to wolf-like behaviour (*fáelad*, 'wolfing'), which the swineherd clearly finds both strange and terrifying.[8] As West has observed, the charged image of the wolf as an embodiment of social chaos echoes on throughout the saga; and a word later used of the plunderers, *dásachtach* ('frenzied', line 398), may hint at the berserk-like trances associated with werewolves in mediaeval Europe.[9]

Elsewhere, the *Togail* appears closely aligned with a more straightforward ecclesiastical demonization of *díberg*, especially in the person of Ingcél. It is this British prince who suggests to the exiled Irish plunderers that they enter into a bloodthirsty pact, recalling the hagiographers' *uota mali* or 'pledges of evil'.[10] Ingcél agrees to (p.84) provide them with their choice of plunder in his country, on condition that they provide him with his choice in Ireland. The raid they carry out in Britain is terrible indeed: they slaughter Ingcél's mother, father, brothers, and king (lines 224–6), a multiple *fingal* or kin-slaying which serves to prepare the saga-audience for what the sons of Donn Désa will end up doing to their beloved foster-brother.[11] The saga has made it clear that *díberg* involves the violent breaking of the most sacred social and familial bonds. So, when its practitioners return to Ireland, the

narrator calls them *in t-aes uilc* ('the men of evil', line 618), while D here approaches the language of hagiography still further, calling them *in t-aes demna 7 uilc* ('the men of demons and of evil').[12] On top of this, among their number are some druids who bring a fatal thirst on Conaire in the climactic battle, a malign spell characteristic of the evils of heathenism as embodied by the druids of hagiography.[13]

We do not know whether the author of the *Togail* was himself a monk or cleric, but he clearly assented to this widespread ecclesiastical anti-*díberg* polemic, despite Sharpe's puzzling comment that the *Togail* was 'not influenced by Christianity'.[14] As West states, the saga's structure brings out the message that 'organized lawlessness is a cancer which can strike at the heart of an idyllically peaceful society'.[15] Even the hagiographer's stock image of the church in flames finds its way into this saga set in the depths of the heathen past: each spurt of flame issuing from Conaire's evening fire at Da Derga's Hostel is said to be the size of an oratory on fire (*daig ṅdairthaigi*, literally the 'blaze of an oratory', line 586). An oratory, typically built from oak, was the smallest variety of ecclesiastical building in the Gaelic world, presenting an easy target for a plundering pyromaniac. This graphic image of *díberg* is reminiscent of accounts in Irish chronicles of oratories and churches burned down by ninth-century Viking raiders, whose violence is also presented as irredeemably heathen. Jan Erik Rekdal, commenting on this anachronistic reference, has suggested that it could be the result of an accidental slip by a scribe all too familiar with churches on fire.[16] Yet the framing of this simile suggests to me that it was carefully chosen by the author: the description of Conaire's evening fire is presented here (in narratological terms, focalized) through the viewpoint of the plunderers, aligning their activity with more recent attacks on the Church itself.[17] (p.85) One may compare it with other passing Christian or biblical allusions in Ulster tales, at moments where the heathen warrior code is revealed in all its naked violence: Cet mac Mágach's reference to himself as a priest (*sacart*) who 'baptized' his enemy with a shameful nickname in *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó* ('The Tale of Mac Da Thó's Pig'), or

Dubthach Doeltenga's allusion to Psalm 139's bloodthirsty line about the braining of children in *Mesca Ulad* ('The Drunkenness of the Ulstermen').[18] John Carey has suggested that apparent anachronisms like these may have served as Christian 'signatures', setting up an ironic distance between the audience and the barbaric events narrated, and the reference to the burning oratory in the *Togail* may be interpreted in a similar way.[19]

However, leaving aside this minor but telling intrusion from the cosmos of Irish Christianity, the saga-author has refrained from any *overtly* Christian condemnation of *díberg*.[20] Unlike *díberg*-episodes in saints' lives, where the culprits typically repent or are punished, the ending of this story does not bring home any satisfyingly black-and-white message. The sons of Donn Désa may be implicitly punished for their role in the destruction by being killed in the last battle, but Ingcél walks free and becomes king in his own country.[21] A still more striking feature of the *Togail* is its presentation of disturbingly symmetrical parallels between the practices of *díberg* and kingship, prompting the audience to view each in the other's light. In particular, both practices are seen to involve parallel dilemmas from which there is no easy exit once the initial wrong has been done.

The Demands of *Díberg*

For the sons of Donn Désa, *díberg* represents a hereditary prerogative no less necessary for them than is Conaire's kingship to him, reflecting the recognized status of the *fían* in early mediaeval Irish society. Theft, plunder, and murder are *dána a n-athar 7 a seanathar* ('the professions of their father and grandfather', line 193), just as Conaire calls his kingship, a few lines earlier, *cert n-athar 7 seanathar* ('the right of [my] father and grandfather', lines 163–4).[22] The concept of hereditary right was a powerful social norm in mediaeval Ireland, carrying with it a strong sense of obligation. One Middle Irish poem offering advice for a young king contains a section which opens with the maxim *Roscāiled do chāch a ord* ('For each his task has been appointed') and states, in a long list of different professions, (p.86) that male offspring should

always follow in their fathers' footsteps: the potter's son should take to the clay, the physician's son should be a physician, and *Mac ind ḟoglada icond ulc: o phurt do phurt* ('[Let] the plunderer's son [take] to evil-doing from harbour to harbour').[23] Yet the same poem, like many other Middle Irish mirrors for princes, stresses the king's duty to stamp out lawlessness in his realm.

A similar tension is reflected in the *Togail*. Conaire is fostered alongside three sons of the *fénnid*-champion Donn Désa, suggesting an attempt to bind together the lives and interests of king and plunderer; but the subsequent story dramatizes the irreconcilable and mutually destructive nature of these two aspects of early mediaeval Irish society. The sons of Donn Désa grumble about the loss of their hereditary prerogatives, and subsequently take up *díberg*; but this violates one of Conaire's *gessi*. Because Conaire refuses to kill his own foster-brothers, he is forced to banish the latter to Britain, *co rolát a ndíbearg for firu Alban* ('so that they may inflict their plundering on the men of Alba', line 218).[24] Their subsequent alliance with Ingcél is a direct consequence of this unhappy solution. A supernatural law which appears designed to keep the peace has precisely the opposite effect when acted on by a man anxious to honour his fosterage ties as well as his social and regal responsibilities.

Ejected from Ireland to Britain by the demands of Conaire's *gessi*, the sons of Donn Désa embark on a parallel plot-line of their own.[25] It soon becomes clear that they will be suffering from a similar dilemma to that which led to Conaire's own false judgement, as examined in chapter 2. They, too, are soon forced to choose between dishonouring either their pledges of piracy or their fosterage ties with Conaire. As Sheila Boll has shown, the two dilemmas are of the same basic kind, though this may not be immediately apparent to the modern reader: loyalty to kin versus loyalty to foster-kin.[26] *Díberg* is a hereditary right for the sons of Donn Désa as well as the subject of their pledge with Ingcél; kingship is likewise Conaire's hereditary right and the subject of the contract represented by his *gessi*. Their ancestral prerogatives run in their blood, but are reinforced later in the saga by legalistic

bargains struck with personifications of *díberg* and kingship respectively: Ingcél and Nemglan voice and embody the irresistible power of these prerogatives.

The respective episodes appear to be deliberately paralleled. The sons of Donn Désa, like Conaire, first meet the embodiment of their profession on the waves of (p.87) the sea off the east coast of Ireland. The meeting parties are at first antagonistic: Conaire almost ends up in a fatal *fracas* with the bird-troop, while his foster-brothers almost engage in battle with Ingcél's band. Nemglan and Ingcél respectively halt hostilities at the last minute: Nemglan warns Conaire not to violate his kinship with the birdmen, and Ingcél warns the sons of Donn Désa not to attack his smaller band and thus violate the martial equivalent of the king's *fír flathemon*, namely *fír fer* ('men's truth', 'fair play', lines 411–12). Both figures then propose alternative courses of action, sending Conaire and his foster-brothers on their irresistible collision-course. Ingcél proposes that they enter into a pact of *díberg* with him; Nemglan instructs Conaire to take the kingship and enter into an Otherworldly pact embodied in a formal set of *gessi* issued by himself. Both Ingcél and Nemglan introduce these courses of action using a word relating to the adjective *cóir* ('fitting, proper'), a word which recurs throughout the opening description of Étaín as woman of sovereignty and echoes on throughout the tale to denote physical symmetry and perfection as well as ethical fittingness.[27] Nemglan tells Conaire that going to Tara would be *córu deit* ('more fitting', line 149), while Ingcél begins his overtures to the sons of Donn Désa by proposing that they all make peace (*Dénam córai*, line 415): the noun *córae* ('peace') commonly denotes propriety and physical symmetry as well as peace.[28] From the perspective of a hereditary plunderer, *díberg* constitutes correct behaviour.

One superficially puzzling aspect of this saga's construction is its interlace technique, in which two story-lines are presented as parallel by cutting back and forth in defiance of strict chronological order.[29] This technique is generally taken as evidence of accidental doubling of episodes from variant sources, but in this case it allows further ironies to build up.

The Plunderers' Dilemma

The encounter between the two pirate bands is narrated twice, first in its proper chronological place and later as a flashback. But only the second, more detailed account contains direct speech and reveals the nature and circumstances of their bargain: only after Conaire has violated several prohibitions are the parallels between his Otherworldly contract and his foster-brothers' demonic pact suddenly made apparent. This delay allows the breakdown of Conaire's *fír flathemon* to reveal itself starkly as one prohibition after another is violated —so that in the subsequent flashback, when Ingcél entreats the sons of Donn Désa not to violate *fír fer*, the irony of the parallel is clear. The fatal collision of kingly and heroic codes is taken up later when the sons of Donn Désa try to avoid attacking Conaire: the other plunderers echo Ingcél's insistence on the pact by repeating the pregnant word *fír*: *'Is fír, is fír,' or in t-aes uilc* ('"It is true, it is true," said the men of evil', line 618). For Conaire and his foster-brothers, the prerogatives of their respective kin rapidly become millstones around their necks.

The force exerted by these opposed demands is no less than superhuman. Nemglan and Ingcél embody this irresistible power in their own persons. Like (p.88) subsequent Otherworldly apparitions, Nemglan cannot be harmed or contravened, because he is not of this world: Conaire's attempt to attack him fails, he has privileged access to hidden knowledge, and the Otherworld's destructive strength is vividly borne out by later events. We saw in chapter 2 how Conaire's *gessi* exert pressure on the king. We now turn to Ingcél who, in constantly reminding the sons of Donn Désa of their duty to fulfil their side of the bargain, comes to personify that pledge. Ingcél's importance in the saga is second only to that of Conaire and his foster-brothers, yet his motivations are made less explicit and require close attention. He is a more interesting character than a casual reading of the saga might suggest.

Like Nemglan, Ingcél is presented as both emotionally and physically invulnerable. Despite his comrades' pleas he is implacable in his determination to exact from them *orcain fon orgain* ('a massacre for a massacre' or 'a destruction for a

destruction', line 437), and it is repeatedly foretold of him that, unlike them, he will walk away from the destruction victorious and unharmed. His invulnerability draws strength, on two levels, from the multiple kin-slayings and regicide in which he was involved in Britain. First and most importantly, with this deed he has unquestionably fulfilled his side of the bargain: the sons of Donn Désa face dishonour if they do not repay him, a point he repeatedly makes.[30] Second, by bringing about the deaths of his close family and king, he has violently severed all his familial ties to settled people and his duty to his king.[31] Therefore Ingcél can say with truth that *ní fil ní nád faelasa ó sin innonn* ('there is nothing I shall not endure from now on', line 739). An exile before, he has now made himself a rootless *fían*-champion par excellence, and this makes him literally untouchable, indeed not quite human.[32] Like the Fomorian champion Balor in the Middle Irish mythological saga *Cath Maige Tuired*, he is described as being huge, swarthy, ferocious, and possessed of a single, enormous, and malignant eye.[33] To Conaire's foster-brothers he is as unnaturally 'terrifying' as the Otherworldly portents are to Conaire and his men (*húathmar*, lines 337–8, 406).

As with the parallel between *fír fer* and *fír flathemon*, this link between Ingcél's monstrous appearance and his monstrous deeds has been reinforced by means of the flashback arrangement. The first time Ingcél is mentioned in the text, his appearance is not described, but we are told of the massacre he provided for his comrades in Britain. All we hear of him is the scale and thoroughness of his kin-slayings: he is defined by his deed as well as by his ill-starred name. But when this (p.89) episode is repeated in the flashback, Ingcél's hideous appearance is suddenly revealed to us: a somewhat abstract personification of *fingal* now assumes flesh and blood. Of course, in terms of the story's implied chronology—what a narratologist would call the 'fabula'—this description again represents Ingcél *before* the massacre. But in terms of the narrative arrangement (which so consistently emphasizes the importance of visualization), it is as if the deed he has been compelled to do makes a monster of him.

The Plunderers' Dilemma

This element of compulsion is important. Ingcél is often seen as the villain of the saga, and certainly, as we shall see, the *Togail* displays the sons of Donn Désa in a much more sympathetic light than their increasingly monstrous comrade, focusing in detail on their vain attempts to avoid having to attack their foster-brother. The very brevity of the description of Ingcél's *fingal* seems on the face of it to suggest that he, by contrast, had been perfectly happy to carry out this deed: the narrative does not focus closely on this episode and allows no direct or indirect speech, so motivations remain invisible at this point. West, for example, has stated that 'Ingcél's choice of plunder is ruthless, in that at his instigation the brigands' combined forces perpetrate the horrendous slaughter of his father […]'.[34] However, the text opens up the possibility that Ingcél faced a dilemma parallel to that of his comrades, and leaves little room for the idea that the killing of his own family was 'Ingcél's choice of plunder'.

At this point it is necessary to examine all the extant texts, because they vary in their wording for the first clause of the crucial passage.[35] It runs as follows in Y:

> Isí orcain tuc Ing[cél] dó, adaig ro curetha 7 a máthair 7 a athair 7 a seacht nderbráithri do thig ríg a thúaithi orta uile la hIṅgcél in n-oenaidche.[36]

> This is the destruction which Ingcél gave him: one night, when his mother, father and seven brothers had been invited to the house of the king of his people, they were all slaughtered by Ingcél in a single night.

The explanation of what happened on that 'one night' is common to all five texts for this passage (Y, H2, D, U, and E); the introductory clause, however, varies considerably.[37] In the passage from Y just quoted, the referent of *dó* is somewhat unclear. One would expect *tuc doib* ('gave them'), and this reading is given in H2: *Is i orcain tug Ingcel doip* ('This is the destruction which Ingcél gave them').[38] Either (p.90) way, the implications of the verb *do-beir* are clear: Ingcél has 'given' or 'provided' this destruction.[39] He has certainly not 'chosen' it, since it was not for him to choose; nor was it necessarily he

who invited his family to his king's house. In D and U, meanwhile, the verbal form *tuc* is put to different use: D has *issi orcuin tuc a ainfén dó*; U has *Is í orcain tuc a aínfén dósom*.[40] Both may be translated: 'this is the destruction which his bad luck gave him', perhaps even 'landed him with'.[41] The word *ainfén* ('bad luck') hints at an unfortunate and ill-starred Ingcél, compelled by his pledge to commit the most grievous of deeds. His ill luck is echoed in his own name which (in the forms Ingcél or Ain[g]cél) can be interpreted as meaning 'ill omen' or 'bad luck'.[42] It is Ingcél who is landed with the unenviable duty of providing the sons of Donn Désa with their first pickings. The fact that this was not his choice but theirs is underlined explicitly the second time the episode is narrated, where we are told that in exchange for Ingcél's choice of plunder in Ireland, he gives the sons of Donn Désa *orgain ba togaidi do maccaib Duind Désa i nAlpain* ('the plunder which was the choice of the sons of Donn Désa in Alba', line 424).

This explains Ingcél's determination when, on Irish soil, it becomes apparent that his comrades' foster-brother Conaire is a possible target for his attack. Not only are the dictates of honour and the obligations of the pledge about to be satisfied; there is also something akin to vengeance in Ingcél's words at this point. This may seem contradictory, but the kin-slayer's situation was inherently paradoxical: in the tragic tale *Fingal Rónáin*, for instance, the old king Rónán orders his own son to be slain by his champion Aedán, but expresses clear satisfaction when (in the ensuing chaos) Aedán is subsequently killed by Rónán's grandson avenging his father's death.[43] Rónán's response is both just and paradoxical: he, not Aedán, is the one who has committed *fingal* by ordering his son's death, and his approval of his grandson's act of vengeance is inevitably followed by his own sudden death (albeit with no explicit causal link).[44] Likewise, in the *Togail*, it is both strange and just that Ingcél the kin-slayer should accuse his comrades:

> 'Ní fil nád ró damsa,' ol Ingcél, 'inid mo athair 7 mo máthair 7 mo secht ṅderbráithir 7 rí mo thúaithi ortabairsi […]'[45]

The Plunderers' Dilemma

> 'There is nothing that is not due to me,' said Ingcél, 'since you slaughtered my father, my mother, my seven brothers, and the king of my people […]'

This approaches the language of a wronged man seeking massive compensation from his family's killers. Of course these plunderers are not operating according to the rules of settled society: their pledges work in defiance of other ties, and besides, Ingcél himself took part in and provided the massacre. His stern phrasing nevertheless makes it clear that he has made the ultimate sacrifice and will claim nothing less in return. As the sons of Donn Désa admit, it is now *deithbir* ('fitting, proper', lines 666 and 725) that he should have his choice of plunder, and for them to back out now would violate their honour and that of their guarantors.[46]

Ingcél thus seems to draw a grim satisfaction from the prospect that his comrades will have to suffer as much as himself. On two occasions, the sons of Donn Désa express their grief at the possibility that they will have to attack Conaire:

> 'Ní tuca Día and in fer sin[47] innocht,' fordat meic Duind Désa, 'is líach.'[48]

> 'Ní bud líacha suidiu limsa,' for Inġcél, 'indás inn orcuin do-ratsa dúibse.[49] Ba hé mo líthsa bid é do-chorad and.'[50]

> 'May God not bring that man there tonight!' said the sons of Donn Désa. 'It is grievous.'

> 'That would be less grievous[51] for me,' said Ingcél, 'than the destruction I gave you. It would be my luck if he happened to be there.'

On the second occasion Ingcél's rejoinder is still more explicit:

> 'Ní thuca Día and anocht in fearsin […] Is líach garsécle dó.'

The Plunderers' Dilemma

(p.92) 'Ba hé mo líthsa,' for Ingcél, 'bid hé do-chorad and. Ba hé orgain fón aile.[52] Ní bu ansu limsa indas mo máthir 7 mo athir 7 mo secht nderbráithir 7 rí mo thúaithi do-ratusa dúibsi[53] ría tuidecht ina athchor ndíbeirgi.'[54]

'May God not bring that man there tonight!' [said Fer Rogain.] 'Grievous is the shortness of his life.'

'It would be my luck,' said Ingcél, 'if he should happen to be there. That would be one destruction for another. It would be less difficult for me than my mother, father, seven brothers, and the king of my people, whom I delivered to you before coming [here] for plunder in return.'

That Ingcél's own kin had been at the house they plundered in Britain was, according to D and U, his *ainfén* ('bad luck'); that his comrades' foster-brother and king should now cross his path is *mo líthsa*—an idiomatic expression meaning literally 'my feast' but equivalent to the English phrase 'my lucky day'.[55] On both occasions, Ingcél's statement juxtaposes his exultation at what is to come with a bitter reminiscence of what his comrades had compelled him to do in Britain. So, while the straightforward geometry of revenge cannot be mapped onto either the supra-personal *díberg*-pledge or the paradox of kin-slaying, we may sense their proximity in Ingcél's rejoinders. These vengeful symmetries are underlined by the repetition of the legalistic phrase *orcain fon orgain* ('a destruction for a destruction', lines 228, 437, and 614). The sons of Donn Désa pay dearly for their choice of raid: they and almost all their men are slain at Da Derga's Hostel.[56]

As the plunderers' trajectory approaches Da Derga's Hostel, the narrative is focalized increasingly through the perceptions and emotions of the sons of Donn Désa, while the two raids are made to mirror each other as closely as possible. The brief account of the British raid could almost serve as a summary of the Irish one, and this symmetry is consistently underlined by narrator and characters alike. So, as the narrative affords us ever-richer insights into the tragic dilemma faced by the sons of Donn Désa, the bare narrative of what Ingcél faced in

Britain somehow gains depth in retrospect. Its function may be compared with that of the Ingeld-story in the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*, with which (as West has suggested) it may ultimately share material.[57] The story of the foreign prince Ingeld and his (p.93) ill-fated marriage to the daughter of his old enemy Hrothgar remains in that poem's background, reduced to a tantalizing but potent fragment: in Paul Bibire's words, it is a 'narrative shard' which 'refracts images and themes' of events in the foreground.[58] It also alerts the audience to the fact that, in the near future, the royal hall Heorot will burn at the hands of its sometime ally Ingeld. The Irish account achieves similar ends, foreshadowing a similar fiery destruction. However, this is a resumé rather than a 'shard', is unlit by direct speech, and occupies a different position in the story to that of the Old English account. In *Beowulf*, the dimly glimpsed catastrophe is yet to come, a destruction which awaits Hrothgar's royal hall, its seeds only now beginning to germinate in the king's futile attempts at peace-weaving. The British cataclysm in the *Togail*, by contrast, now lies in the past. Yet it too—alongside Conaire's own failure to enforce peace—is seen to have cradled the seeds of the destruction towards which the saga is now hurtling.

The account of the British raid, then, may be as concise as an annal-entry, but it remains crucial to the construction of the dilemma faced by Conaire's foster-brothers. As with many other prefigurings in this saga, we build up a fuller picture of its significance only in retrospect, once the situation prefigured has taken place. Such scraps of narrative—anecdotes, throwaway remarks, scholarly asides—may seem relatively irrelevant to the 'main' plot, but all too often, in the laconic world of Irish saga, they are richly freighted with meaning, especially on second or third reading or hearing.

In this case, such hints at Ingcél's earlier predicament reinforce a sense that the chief characters of the *Togail* do not come ready-made and easy to judge, whatever colourful clichés may have gone into their construction. Like its closest biblical analogue, the book of 1 Samuel, this narrative repeatedly probes the difficulty of judging the inner worth of a

person from their physical appearance, while at the same time encouraging us to make such judgements.[59] The author was interested primarily in the violation of the inviolable, in decisions made and deeds done by humans under inhuman pressures. His chief characters are not defined as good or bad from the start, but make choices—inevitably, the wrong choices—and suffer accordingly. Ingcél displays demonic characteristics not by virtue of being Ingcél, but because he chooses to play by the rules of the demonic practice of *díberg*. The same fate awaits the sons of Donn Désa. They may not be one-eyed and seven-pupilled; but they allow themselves to become corrupted, to become monsters of the same kind, for this is what their pledges and their honour require.

(p.94) Facing the Dilemma

The pressure on both Conaire and the sons of Donn Désa to hold fast to their particular kinship-prerogatives is appalling. But so, too, is the opposing pressure of their mutual and more immediately human ties of foster-kinship, which the saga presents as especially close.[60] In particular, Conaire's divine ancestry and royal calling is offset, and indeed tripped up, by his obligations to an unusually large number of foster-brothers and foster-parents. His mother arranges for him to be fostered three times, both as a mark of special prestige and as a means of providing him with a variety of close allies;[61] so he is fostered by the two servants who had fostered her, by two men named Maine Milscothach, and by his own mother.[62] At this point in the saga (lines 111–14), three of Donn Désa's seven sons[63] are mentioned as having been raised alongside him: Fer Lé, Fer Gar, and Fer Rogain. As the narrative progresses, Conaire is revealed to have still more fosterage ties, resulting in a proliferation of dilemmas of the same kind. For instance, Donn Désa's four remaining sons Fer Gel, Fer Rogel, Lomna the Fool, and Fer Cúailge come into the story later on: they are plunderers like their brothers, and their kinship means that they too are his foster-brothers even though they were not raised alongside him. Indeed, one of them, Lomna the Fool, is especially unhappy about attacking Conaire, and Fer Rogel and Fer Cúailge are specifically referred to as Conaire's foster-brothers (lines 1188–90).[64] And

when Conaire violates two of his prohibitions by settling a quarrel in Thomond and staying five nights with each quarreller (lines 229–35), his action is explained by the fact that they are foster-brothers of his, perhaps the biological sons of two of his many foster-parents. His decision here highlights and reiterates the choice he has already made to honour his fosterage ties above his Otherworldly kin.

This conflict of interests may even be reflected in the fact that the saga-author has given one plunderer the same name as two of Conaire's fosterers mentioned in line 106: Maine Milscothach. The plunderer Maine Milscothach, son of Ailill (p.95) and Medb (his seven brothers also have the personal name Maine), is clearly presented as a different person from the other two called Maine Milscothach, who had suffered directly from the plunderers' depredations.[65] In Recension Ib, Maine Milscothach is the plunderer who pleads with Ingcél not to carry out the destruction, while a Middle Irish collection of Leinster genealogies numbers him among the sons of Donn Désa.[66] There was clearly some disagreement among mediaeval scholars as to the ancestry of Maine Milscothach, which the author of the *Togail* circumvented by coming up with no fewer than three men of the same name. At the same time, this identity of names gives yet another iteration—here on the level of word-play—of the pattern by which Conaire's closest allies turn into his enemies. His Otherworldly kin raises him up, only to condemn him to death; his beloved foster-brothers turn against him and ultimately destroy him; his talents, which he taught them, proliferate among the plunderers and are wielded against him; and here, two of his fosterers slip out of the narrative only for their name to reappear in the person of one of his enemies.[67] The second part of this name, *Milscothach* ('honey-words'), encapsulates the potential of these various characters to seem fair yet play foul.[68]

Of all Conaire's foster-relations, the three sons of Donn Désa mentioned in line 112 are dearest to him, and their closeness is emphasized from the start. Like many sets of foster-brothers in mediaeval Irish narrative, they are inseparable and function initially as a single unit: Conaire teaches them his own special

talents, and all four wear the same clothes, carry the same weapons, ride horses of the same colour, and go everywhere together (lines 115–21).[69] It is only when they go their separate ways that relations worsen: their resentment of him leads to their first petty crimes (lines 192–7). But their fosterage ties remain strong: the abhorrence which the sons of Donn Désa feel at the idea of attacking their foster-brother emerges in their frequent and impassioned expressions of grief (line 491 *et passim*). The narrative has been carefully arranged to dramatize the process by which they become aware that there is no escape. This arrangement parallels Conaire's own growing (p.96) awareness of his fate, explored in the next two chapters; but the plunderers' path towards awareness is bound up with their response to their dilemma, and must be examined here.

This process is built around three separate spying-episodes. First, while the plunderers are still at sea, Maine Andoe and Maine Milscothach observe and identify Conaire's retinue travelling towards the Hostel (lines 431–78); second, the plunderers observe the Hostel from a distance and Fer Rogain identifies its royal occupant (lines 580–619); third, Ingcél goes right up to the Hostel and observes everyone within, and his descriptions are identified in the description-sequence (lines 620–1394). Conaire is described and identified in all three episodes, leading textual critics to see these episodes as what West has termed 'episodic doublets', variant accounts of the same episode joined together in such a way as disrupts the narrative's 'logical progression'.[70] But this diagnosis is predicated on a particular view of how such utterances should function: it assumes that they are exclusively utilitarian, as if the plunderers are merely ticking off Conaire's name on a list.

On the contrary, the identification of third parties can reveal as much about the speakers as about the persons described.[71] Its openness to speaker-characterization throughout literary history may be concisely illustrated with reference to another Shakespearean example. In the tragicomedy *Troilus and Cressida*, Pandarus, desperate to interest his niece Cressida in the hero Troilus, is identifying the Trojan warriors returning from the battlefield one by one:

The Plunderers' Dilemma

Helenus passes Cressida.

Who's that?
Pandarus.

That's Helenus. I marvel where Troilus is. That's Helenus. I think he went not forth today. That's Helenus.[72]

On the 'bureaucratic' model of the watchman device, Pandarus's triple identification of Helenus is illogical, evidence that Shakespeare's mind was wandering. In terms of the drama, however, the repetition underlines Pandarus's own distracted and impatient state of mind as he begins to fear that Troilus will not come.[73] In the *Togail*, the repeated identifications made by the sons of Donn Désa (p.97) are dramatized to convey their growing certainty that Conaire *will* come, and their resolve to carry out the attack nevertheless. The Shakespearean example, culturally light-years away from the *Togail*, underlines the general point that repetition can serve dramatic ends, even within such a conventional structuring framework as a description-identification scene.[74] Saga-authors, no less than playwrights, needed to retain their hold over their audiences.

In the first spying-episode, Maine Andoe reports that Conaire is proceeding along Slige Chúaland (lines 468–70). Shortly afterwards, the spark with which Mac Cécht lights Conaire's fire drives the plunderers back out to sea, and Ingcél asks Fer Rogain to identify the noise: *Samailte latsu, a Ḟir Rogain* ('Explain that, Fer Rogain', line 483). Fer Rogain offers three alternatives, beginning with a formula which will reappear later:

'Ní ḟetursa […] manid Luchton Cáinti fail indi[75] in nEmain[76] Machae do-gní in bosorcuine seo oc gait a bíd aire ar éigin, nó gréch ind Luchduind hi Temair Lúachrae nó béim spréde Meic Cécht oc atúd tened ría ríg Hérenn airm hi foí.'[77]

'I do not know, unless it is the satirist Luchdond in Emain Macha clapping his hands in this way[78] when his

food is stolen from him, or the Luchdond in Temair Lúachra screaming, or Mac Cécht striking a spark to kindle a fire for the king of Ireland in the place where he is to spend the night.'

We have just been shown Mac Cécht striking the spark, so we know that his third answer is right; but, within the saga, the fact that Fer Rogain's identification is couched in the language of alternative possibilities remains significant. By itself, Maine Andoe's information does not necessarily imply that Conaire will end up in the Hostel, and the sons of Donn Désa naturally hope (or express their hope) against the odds: *Ní tuca Día and in fer sin innocht* ('May God not bring that man there tonight!', line 491).

The second identification is made at a distance, and Ingcél tries to force Fer Rogain to admit that Conaire is indeed in the Hostel: *Samailte lat, a Ḟir Rogain […] Císí suillse mór sucut?* ('Identify that, Fer Rogain. What is that great light yonder?', lines 591–2). But, here too, Fer Rogain's rhetoric clings to the possibility that Conaire is not there:

> (p.98) 'Nochom-thása a ṡamail, mani daig do rígh. Ní thuctha[79] Día and inocht in fer hísin. Is líach.'[80]

> 'I know of nothing like it, unless it is a fire for a king. May God not bring that man there tonight! It is grievous.'

Conventional as this 'qualified ignorance' formula may be to the saga's audience, it is still being used by Fer Rogain as if there was room for hope that Conaire might not be there. He makes the same appeal to God after describing Conaire's glorious reign (lines 610–11), although in his final comment he seems to resign himself to the fact that Conaire is within: *Is líach garsécle dó* ('grievous is the shortness of his life', line 612).[81] U makes it clear that the sons of Donn Désa know Conaire is within, because after this last exchange with Ingcél they secretly build a fire *do brith robaid do Conaire* ('to give warning to Conaire', lines 7041–2).

However, they have not yet made a formal acknowledgement to Ingcél that Conaire is definitely in the Hostel. West here diagnoses an 'absence of logical progression' between the various spying-episodes: Conaire has already been identified by the two Maines in lines 431–78, but in the plunderers' subsequent conversation (lines 620–69) 'ignorance is professed until Fer Rogain makes the identification' of Conaire at the end of the passage.[82] Dramatically, however, this is the very point. Fer Rogain finally utters his identification of the king at a pivotal moment in the text: the speech in which he does so ushers in the great sequence of descriptions which takes up almost all the rest of the saga. This speech is, however, preceded and prepared for by three other important formal (indeed almost bureaucratic) identifications. Each of these serves to define the coming destruction and to suggest—though not yet to state—that Conaire is to be its victim.[83] First, the plunderers build a cairn to mark the occasion formally as an *orgun* ('destruction, raid, massacre'), rather than as a *maidm n-imairic* ('battle-rout') for which a pillar-stone would be appropriate (lines 620–8).[84] Second, Ingcél asks which place is nearest to them and receives the answer *Bruiden Huí Da*[85] *Dergae* (p.99) (line 631);[86] this is the first time anyone in the plunderers' company mentions the Hostel itself. They have of course just been looking at the Hostel, or rather at the firelight it is emitting: the significance of this exchange lies in the fact that their destination—which we have known all along, thanks to the saga's title[87] and our view of Conaire's trajectory—is at last formally named by the plunderers. Third, Ingcél himself now goes to spy on the Hostel, and when he comes back he declares himself satisfied in his choice of plunder: *Bé fo ná bé rí and, gébassa a tech isinní no dligim* ('Whether there be a king or not there, I will take that house for what is owed me', lines 656–7). He has seen, but not identified, the occupants of the Hostel, and he now implies that the presence or absence of Conaire means nothing to him: he is clearly taunting the sons of Donn Désa, to whom Conaire means so much. So they ask him to describe what he saw (lines 659–61).

But before Ingcél has a chance to answer, Fer Rogain makes the fourth and last of this series of formal statements, telling

Ingcél that the plunder is his by right, and stating straightforwardly that Conaire is inside:

> 'Is deithber dait, a Ingcél, cía no gabtha,' ol Fer Rogain. 'Ar n-aitine[88] fil ann .i. ardrí Hérenn, Conaire mac Etirscéoil.'[89]

> 'What you take, Ingcél, is yours by right,' said Fer Rogain. 'Our foster-father is there, the over-king of Ireland, Conaire mac Eterscéle.'

For the first time, Fer Rogain's identification of Conaire is not hedged about in riddles or alternatives. Neither he nor his brothers now express any hope that Conaire might escape his fate. This utterance functions as a formal acknowledgement that he and his foster-brothers, faced with conflicting obligations, have made their choice. They ratify Ingcél's decision, even though it clearly means attacking their foster-brother.

Fer Rogain's wording is highly significant: he calls Conaire *ar n-aitine* ('our foster-father'). This phrasing recalls an equivalent slip made by Conaire when issuing his false judgement concerning his foster-brothers: *Oircead cách a mac*[90] *7 ainciter mo daltaiseo* ('Let each man kill his son, but let my foster-sons be spared', line 214). The terminology is, technically, incorrect: West and Boll see it as another example of a textual 'contradiction' overlooked by the compiler, while Knott noted the saga-author's 'Shakespearian impatience of detail'.[91] This is indeed a Shakespearean moment. Conaire's hasty words illuminate both the strength of his (p.100) affection towards his renegade foster-brothers and his desire to protect them as if he were their fosterer, even as he commands every father present to slay his own son. It is the mediaeval Irish equivalent of a Freudian slip, emerging at a moment when Conaire is under severe strain and struggling to reconcile his duties and pledges to his kin with his affection for his foster-kin. The paternal quality of this affection, implied by his educational provision mentioned earlier, now emerges into the open.[92] Fer Rogain's slip is a direct mirror-image of Conaire's, occurring at the moment when he is finally answering his own dilemma between his pledge to uphold his

kinship prerogatives and his attachment to his foster-brother. But whereas Conaire's utterance had commanded his foster-brothers to be spared, Fer Rogain's words condemn Conaire to death.

Yet, although they have now made their choice, the sons of Donn Désa continue to demonstrate their reluctance to carry it through. Procrastination has already been a significant feature of both their and Conaire's approaches to their respective dilemmas. Conaire's first mistake had been to delay taking action against his foster-brothers' petty thieving: the farmer whose livestock they had stolen had come to Conaire to complain, but each time Conaire had failed to do anything about it. In the judgement-scene he had attempted to satisfy the demands of justice while still honouring his affection for his foster-brothers, first ordering all plunderers except these three to be executed, and then banishing them all to Britain, buying time for his own kingdom by inflicting this forbidden social evil on other shores. Likewise, the rhetoric of qualified ignorance in which the sons of Donn Désa have hitherto been dealing suggests a similar avoidance of the ugly truth, while in U their lighting of a beacon to warn Conaire (lines 7041–2) again shows them struggling to honour both their fosterage ties and their pledge with Ingcél.[93]

Their masterstroke of procrastination is their demand that Ingcél describe everyone inside the Hostel. They first make this demand just after Ingcél's formal declaration that he will take the Hostel as his due:

> 'Fa-rácbaisemne fri láim deitsiu, a Ingcél,' fordat comaltai Conaire,[94] 'nád ṅ-íurmais orguin co feasmais cía no beth indti.'[95]

> 'We stipulated to you, Ingcél,' said Conaire's foster-brothers, 'that we would carry out no raid until we knew who was inside.'

(p.101) They already do know that Conaire is within, as Fer Rogain's next statement concerning his 'foster-father' makes clear. The real reason for their demand is revealed in the term with which the narrator refers to them, at least in Y, D, and U:

comaltai Conaire ('Conaire's foster-brothers', lacking in H2 and E). The last time the narrator had used this epithet of them (line 192) was at the very beginning of their career of crime, when they began to complain about Conaire suppressing their kinship-prerogatives. After this point, they have been repeatedly labelled simply *meic Duind Désa*, as if to highlight their separation from the foster-brother with whom they were once so close. As they approach him once again, their fosterage ties are flagged up by Conaire, who refers to them as *comalta carthacha dún* ('dear foster-brothers to me', line 505); and now the narrator subtly underlines their affection for him by using the same term, whilst they buy time before their violation of these fosterage ties is finally consummated. Their demand for descriptions is repeated by Fer Rogain, immediately after acknowledging Conaire's presence: *Cest, cid at-chonnarcaissiu isin ḟochlu féindida in tigi fri enech ríg isind leith anall?* ('So whom did you see in the champion's seat of the house, facing the king on the other side?', lines 668–9). Thus begins the description-sequence, which takes up half the saga's length. Staged and prepared for in this way, it does not simply lever the narrative out of the realms of real time and space, but also plays a genuinely dramatic role, every single act of observation-*cum*-identification serving to delay the attack still further and highlight the motives of Conaire's foster-brothers.

The dilemma which both parties face, between the demands of kin and those of foster-kin, forces a choice between two potentially disastrous courses of action.[96] Conaire faces it first, and his choice (honouring his fosterage ties by sparing his foster-brothers) results directly in his foster-brothers having to face it themselves—at which point they make the opposite choice. The dilemma's significance is amplified in both cases. Conaire's choice is couched in terms of *fingal*, of fathers slaying sons. This allusion recalls his own and his mother's narrow escapes from death at the hands of their parental kin; it also prefigures the bloody retribution which his Otherworldly kin is about to visit upon him; and it foreshadows the *fingal*-like regicide which his foster-brothers and Ingcél will soon commit. The Otherworld now forces Conaire to reiterate the same choice over and over again, in slightly

different circumstances, violating one prohibition after another at an accelerating rate while attempting to honour more immediate concerns (such as hospitality and fosterage ties). At the same time, Ingcél is forcing the sons of Donn Désa to reiterate their own decision by reaffirming their pledges and predicting Conaire's downfall with mounting grief and remorse.

Interpreting the Dilemma

This rhetorical arrangement, emphasizing the irrevocable nature of both choices, both tempts the audience to judge who was right and makes such judgement (p.102) problematic. Philip O'Leary has suggested, not unreasonably, that in many cases Conaire's choice not to honour his *gessi* is 'correct'; but O'Leary has simplified matters by representing the alternative as an 'individualized obsession with [one's] own honour'.[97] This distinctively modern 'individualist' interpretation ignores the supra-personal significance and cosmic power which the saga accords to Conaire's *gessi*. Something similar is true of the plunderers' pledges, whose force as a motivating factor in saga narrative should not be underestimated.[98]

For interpretative guidance it is worth looking at how the saga's internal audiences respond to the protagonists' choices. In mediaeval sagas, as in the chorus of Greek tragedy, internal audiences help to modulate the real audience's interpretation of events. The chief internal audience of the *Togail* comprises the people accompanying Conaire, whose utterances provide a touchstone of collective judgement at crucial moments.[99] Yet, like the Greek chorus, this audience is not infallible. It simply adds one more level of response and evaluation to the other voices in the saga: unlike (for instance) the internal audiences of Icelandic saga, its judgements do not provide a key to the view of the implied author.[100]

This audience first appears in lines 160–1, voicing public disapproval of the new king's evident immaturity, but he quickly persuades them with phrases learnt from Nemglan. Bowled over, these people immediately make him king: *'Amrae n-amrae,' ol in slúag* ('"Wonder of wonders!" said the crowd', line 165). The people's next appearance coincides with

another dramatic *volte-face*, this time by Conaire. They adoringly uphold his decision to kill all the plunderers but his foster-brothers—*'Cet, cet,' or cach* ('"Hear, hear!" said everyone', line 215)—and when he hastily retracts this judgement and orders banishment instead, the people obediently carry it out (line 219). The third utterance made by Conaire's audience suggests a tempering of their former unqualified approval: when, terrified, he asks what the spectral visions of devastation mean, the people tell him that *in cháin ro mebaid* ('the law has shattered', lines 243–4). The implication seems to be that, if only Conaire had executed all the plunderers in accordance with that law and the demands of his kin, disaster could have been averted.

Yet, once again, this is not the only meaning generated by this passage when read in the context of the saga as a whole. A strange parallel is subsequently set up between the contracts of kingship and *díberg*. Ingcél's audience, too, urges unyielding adherence to a binding contract which is similarly upheld by the prerogatives of kinship. Ingcél's insistence on the sons of Donn Désa keeping their pledges is (p.103) unquestioningly supported by his own audience: *'Is fír, is fír,' or in t-aes uilc*[101] *robátar immailli frisna díbergachu* ('"It is true, it is true," said the men of evil who where around the plunderers', lines 618–19). This audience may consist of evildoers, but its syntax and repetition directly echo the saga's first two audience-judgements—*Amrae n-amrae* and *Cet, cet* (lines 165, 215)—which related to Conaire's royal birthright: the parallel between *gessi* and plunder-pledge is strengthened on yet another level.

The result is something of a conundrum. There can be no doubt that the saga-author was concerned to present *díberg* as a social evil. Why, then, did he put so much effort into setting up such detailed parallels and causal links between the codes and conflicts surrounding kingship and those surrounding piracy? Why, for that matter, does a band of British plunderers number among Conaire's faithful retinue in Da Derga's Hostel (line 1368)? What Joseph Falaky Nagy has called the 'strained yet intimate relationship' between kings and the outlaws who both protect and ravage his realm is most clearly seen in tales

about Finn mac Cumall, but the *Togail* presents its own oblique perspective on a related complex of socio-political problems.[102]

Ultimately, that overwhelming dilemma posed by the common conflict between kinship and foster-kinship is answered one way by Conaire, the other way by his foster-brothers; and the results of both decisions cause the destruction of a realm. Might the closest approximation to a 'moral' for this story be the suggestion offered (but, tantalizingly, not defended) by O'Leary, to the effect that Conaire faced an impossible task? As O'Leary puts it,

> the tension on a king cannot be borne, the balancing act cannot be performed, perfect kingship is beyond human scope […] However prudently driven, in mortal hands the wheel-rims of Morann's old chariot cannot roll for ever.[103]

We shall return to this question in the final chapter. But an out-of-control chariot seems an apt metaphor for the hurtling momentum with which Conaire and his kingship rush towards ruin. This sense of events escalating and taking control works to present Conaire and his foster-brothers as the playthings of fate, a perspective which engages in a kind of counterpoint with the protagonists' all-too-evident personal responsibility for what happens. It is therefore worth paying special attention to how this effect is achieved.

Notes:

(1) McCone, 'Werewolves'.

(2) Richard Sharpe, 'Hiberno-Latin *laicus*, Irish *láech* and the Devil's Men', *Ériu*, 30 (1979), 75–92. Ecclesiastical anti-*díberg* polemic is further discussed by McCone, 'Werewolves', pp. 3–9; West, 'Aspects of *díberg*'; and Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 295–9. For a critique of Sharpe's view that such textual evidence testifies to genuine seventh- and eighth-century survivals of *bona fide* 'paganism', see Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth:

Laigin Publications, 1999), pp. 298–318. On the Patristic trope by which demons themselves were represented as plunderers and marauders, see G. J. M. Bartelink, 'Les Démons comme brigands', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 21 (1967), 12–24.

(³) The classic study is Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). The best-known Middle Irish *fían*-saga is *Acallam na Senórach* ('The Conversation of the Elders'), edited as 'Acallamh na Senórach' by Whitley Stokes, in Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch, eds. and trans., *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, 5 vols. in 7 (Leipzig, 1880–1909), IV part I, 1–438, and translated as *Tales of the Elders of Ireland* by Ann Dooley and Harry Roe (Oxford University Press, 1999).

(⁴) Geraldine Parsons, 'A Reading'; for relevant texts, see previous footnote.

(⁵) Jacqueline Borsje, 'Supernatural Threats to Kings: Exploration of a Motif in the Ulster Cycle and in Other Medieval Irish Tales', in Ó hUiginn and Ó Catháin, eds., *Ulidia 2*, pp. 173–94.

(⁶) The phrase *trí .lll.* is often used in manuscript-texts of the *Togail* to mean 'three fifties'.

(⁷) Lines 206–9. Knott emends to Con[n]acht.

(⁸) McCone, 'Werewolves', pp. 15–16; West, 'Aspects of *díberg*', pp. 955–8. My translation of *fáelad* as 'wolfing' follows West ('Aspects of *díberg*', p. 956); compare Stokes's 'were-wolfing' ('The Destruction', p. 30). However, as John Carey has shown, this term in the *Togail* does not necessarily denote literal lycanthropy, but could be metaphorical: see his 'Werewolves in Medieval Ireland', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 44 (Winter 2002), 37–72, pp. 68–70.

(⁹) West, 'Aspects of *díberg*'; McCone, 'Werewolves', p. 16. In Y (MS, col. 722), D (MS, fol. 80v), and E (MS, fol. 20v) it is a *dam* ('bull, ox') who is frenzied, a metaphor for a warlike troop

found in several other, later Irish tales (see Erich Poppe, 'The Early Modern Irish Version of Beves of Hamtoun', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 23 (Summer 1992), 77–98, pp. 84–6). In U (line 6858 and MS, p. 84) it is the more literal *dám*, 'band, troop'. Possibly the latter is meant in the other three texts, which often omit length-marks. On *dásachtach*, see also Jacqueline Borsje, 'Demonising the Enemy: A Study of Congal Cáech', in Jan Erik Rekdal and Ailbhe Ó Corráin, eds., *Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (University of Uppsala, 2007), pp. 21–38, pp. 31–3.

([10]) West, 'Aspects of *díberg*', pp. 958–61. On Ingcél's ominous nature, see Borsje, 'Approaching Danger', pp. 78–84; *eadem*, *The Celtic Evil Eye*, pp. 84–94.

([11]) West, 'Aspects of *díberg*', p. 959.

([12]) D (MS, fol. 81v).

([13]) Sharpe, 'Hiberno-Latin *laicus*', p. 86. For D see Knott, *Togail*, p. 55.

([14]) 'Hiberno-Latin *laicus*', pp. 85–6. Further discussion of this saga's debt to biblical narrative and Christian kingship ideology will follow in chapters 9 and 10.

([15]) West, 'Aspects of *díberg*', p. 952.

([16]) Jan Erik Rekdal, 'From Wine in a Goblet to Milk in Cowdung: The Transformation of Early Christian Kings in Three Post-Viking Tales from Ireland', in Gro Steinsland et al., eds., *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 211–67.

([17]) On focalization in this saga, see the last section of chapter 4; Rekdal himself has discussed the reference in terms of an antithetical association between the Hostel and the Church ('From Wine in a Goblet', pp. 257–60). The parallels between literary representations of *díberg* and those of Viking raids have yet to be explored, though the probable ninth-century date of much of the language in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*

tempts one to speculate that earlier versions of the saga may have been intended to comment on the activities of Vikings and of the Irishmen who allied themselves with them (compare John Carey, 'Myth and Mythography in *Cath Maige Tuired*', *Studia Celtica*, 24–5 (1989–90), 33–69, pp. 58–9).

([18]) Rudolf Thurneysen, ed., *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1935), §12, lines 9–10; Watson, *Mesca Ulad*, lines 928–32 (second recension).

([19]) John Carey, 'Vernacular Irish Learning: Three Notes', *Éigse*, 24 (1990), 37–44, pp. 41–4.

([20]) West ('Aspects of *díberg*', p. 952) draws attention to the text's lack of overtly Christian condemnation of *díberg*, but does not discuss the reference to the oratory.

([21]) In the modernized final sections of D (§§141–67 in Knott, *Togail*), Ingcél is not mentioned in the list of survivors at the end (fol. 85v), although earlier he has been predicted to survive the battle.

([22]) On this parallel see McCone, '*Aided Cheltchair*', pp. 15–16; West, 'Aspects of *díberg*', pp. 952–3; Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', pp. 190–1.

([23]) Tadhg O'Donoghue, ed. and trans., 'Advice to a Prince', *Ériu*, 9 (1921–3), 43–54, p. 49. This text is discussed in Edel Bhreathnach, 'Perceptions of Kingship in Early Medieval Irish Vernacular Literature', in Linda Doran and James Lyttelton, eds., *Lordship in Medieval Ireland: Image and Reality* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 21–46, pp. 27–8. The 'mirror for princes' tradition is discussed in more detail in chapters 9 and 10.

([24]) It is unclear whether the place-name *Albu* here means Britain, North Britain, Scotland, or that part of Scotland ruled by the kings of Scots and termed *Alba* by them. Elsewhere in the *Togail*, a reference to *tír Alban 7 Breatan*' ('the land of Albu and the Britons', line 417) may imply a more restricted meaning than 'Britain', although the phrasing leaves room for doubt. See David N. Dumville, 'Ireland and Britain in *Táin Bó*

Fraích', _Études celtiques_, 32 (1996), 175–87; Dauvit Broun, _Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain: From the Picts to Alexander III_ (Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

([25]) See Figs. 2 and 3 in chapter 4, pp. 105 and 115.

([26]) Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict'.

([27]) See Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', pp. 185–6. On the ethics of _fír fer_, see Philip O'Leary, '_Fír fer_: An Internalized Ethical Concept in Early Irish Literature?', _Éigse_, 22 (1987), 1–14.

([28]) On the close relation between _coir/cóir_ and _córae_, see _DIL_, s.v. _córae_.

([29]) See the last section of chapter 4.

([30]) Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', p. 181.

([31]) Ingcél does have two other brothers, Éiccel and Dartaid na díberga, but they are plunderers like him.

([32]) On the Otherworldly associations of _fénnidi_ see Nagy, _Wisdom of the Outlaw_.

([33]) See Elizabeth A. Gray, ed. and trans., _Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired_ (London: Irish Texts Society, 1982), p. 60 (this text contains substantial Old Irish material but is, like the _Togail_, a Middle Irish redaction). McCone has discussed the parallel between Balor and Ingcél as demonic _fénnidi_ in 'Werewolves', pp. 21–2; see also Nagy, _Conversing with Angels_, pp. 109–10. On the significance of Ingcél's single eye see Borsje, 'Approaching Danger'; _eadem_, _The Celtic Evil Eye_, pp. 84–94. For comparative material, see Scowcroft, 'Abstract Narrative'; Kim McCone, 'The Cyclops in Celtic, Germanic and Indo-European Myth', _Studia Celtica_, 30 (1996), 89–111.

([34]) West, 'Aspects of _díberg_', p. 959.

([35]) On these variants, see Knott, _Togail_, p. 76 n. 224; West, 'An Edition', p. 720; Borsje, 'Approaching Danger', pp. 82–3; _eadem_, _The Celtic Evil Eye_, pp. 90–3.

(³⁶) Lines 224–6; Y (MS, col. 719). In the manuscript-text Ingcél's name is given as *Ing* followed by space for one more letter; Knott, *Togail*, p. 7 n. 2, says that this is an erasure, but if so it is no longer identifiable as such on the manuscript.

(³⁷) E (MS, fol. 19r) has a lacuna between *isi orccain tucc* ('this is the destruction which […] gave') and *adaig* ('night'). The lacuna has room for between eight and eleven characters (*contra* Knott, *Togail*, p. 76 n. 224).

(³⁸) H2 (MS, p. 477), beginning with a majuscule **IS**. West's forthcoming edition uses the H2 reading at this point (Máire West, pers. comm.). A similar reading appears in Recension III: *Is i imorro argain tuc Ingcél doib* ('This, then, is the destruction which Ingcél gave them'). On these two readings, see Borsje, 'Approaching Danger', p. 83.

(³⁹) Borsje ('Approaching Danger', pp. 82–3) has translated *tuc do* as 'brought upon' rather than 'given to': she sees Ingcél as 'inflicting' the destruction, whereas I see him as 'yielding it up' to his comrades. The texts give scope for both readings, and Borsje's interpretation coincides with mine in emphasizing the fact that Ingcél's presence is bad news for all concerned.

(⁴⁰) D (MS, fol. 79v); U, lines 6729–30 (MS, p. 83), beginning with a majuscule **IS**. Lucius Gwynn ('The Recensions', p. 212) thought that this reading was closer to the archetype.

(⁴¹) Stokes ('The Destruction', p. 31) translated *a ainfén* as 'his own impulse', implying that Ingcél had made this decision with no reference to the terms of the pledge. On *ainfén* see *DIL*, s.v. *ainfén*, and the works cited in note 35.

(⁴²) Charles-Edwards, '*Geis*', p. 53 n. 94; Borsje, 'Approaching Danger', p. 81.

(⁴³) Greene, ed., *Fingal Rónáin and Other Stories*, p. 11 (lines 250–62).

(⁴⁴) On the possibility that Rónán is here killed by his own grandson(s), see D. N. Dumville, 'The Conclusion of *Fingal

Rónáin', *Studia Celtica*, 14/15 (1979–80), 71–3; Boll, 'Seduction', pp. 13–16.

([45]) Lines 737–9, adding the point over the *n* of *ṅderbráithir* omitted by Knott. In D (MS, fol. 82r), E (MS, fol. 22v), and U (line 7132) *7 rí mo thúaithi* ('and the king of my people') is lacking; it is present only in Y (MS, col. 728, top margin) and H2 (p. 479.1). In D, E, and U, too, the order of *athair* and *máthair* is the other way round; I here follow Y and H. On *ró*, see West, 'An Edition', pp. 644 and 762.

([46]) The Irish guarantors of the pledge are Fer Rogain (one of the sons of Donn Désa) and two Irishmen named Gér and Gabur (lines 421–3).

([47]) U here has a gloss *.i. Conaire* ('i.e. Conaire', hand M).

([48]) U has *is líach a bith* ('grievous is his life').

([49]) This second sentence appears in D as follows: *Nir luga ba liach limsa ind argain ortabairsi limsa 7 doratus duib* ('No less grievous for me was the destruction which you carried out through me and which I gave you').

([50]) Lines 491–5. Manuscript-texts: Y (MS, col. 724); D (MS, fol. 81r); U, line 6931. D also has *innocht* ('tonight') at the end of the passage and replaces *do-chorad* ('happened to be') with the roughly synonymous later form *no thecmad* (see *DIL*, s.v. *do-ecmaing*).

([51]) More literal translations of *Ní bud líacha suidiu limsa* and (in the second extract quoted) *Ní bu ansu limsa* might read 'That would be no more grievous for me' and 'It would be no harder for me' (compare Gantz, *Early Irish Myths*, pp. 75 and 78, 'It would be no sadder than the destruction I provided', 'This destruction would be no more difficult for me'), but such a rendering would be misleading. Double negatives, with their built-in understatement or *litotes*, were more freely used in mediaeval Irish than in modern standard English. In this case, an over-literal English translation would send out implications directly opposed to those of the original. In English, 'no harder' would suggest that Ingcél is implying that his deed

was 'easy', something which would weaken the force of his rejoinder. On the contrary, he is reminding the sons of Donn Désa that what they made him do in Britain had been no less 'difficult' for him than what he is now expecting them to do.

([52]) Y's sentence here is quite closely paralleled in U and H2, but D has *ba argain mar a chele hi* ('it would be a great destruction as its equivalent').

([53]) Instead of *do-ratusa dúibsi* ('whom I delivered to you'), H2 has *ortapartsi limbsoi* ('whom you slaughtered through me').

([54]) Lines 610–17. Manuscript-texts: Y (MS, cols. 725–6); D (MS, fol. 81v); U, lines 7020–6; H2 (MS, p. 479).

([55]) *DIL*, s.v. *líth* III (a). West has translated *líth* as 'luck' and 'lucky': 'An Edition', pp. 632 and 638. On the principle of symmetry in revenge-tragedy, see John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy from Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

([56]) Except in the modernized conclusion of D (MS, fol. 85v; Knott, *Togail*, p. 67 §159) in which three of Donn Désa's sons survive.

([57]) Beowulf himself alludes to this story in lines 2032–69: see George Jack, ed., *Beowulf: A Student Edition*, 2nd edn. (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 146–9. He reminds the Danes that Ingeld the Heathobard prince is due to marry Freawaru, daughter of the Danish king Hrothgar, in the hope of ending a long-running feud in which Ingeld's father Froda was slain; but he predicts that Ingeld's affection for her will be dampened by the duty of vengeance weighing on his heart, and that the feud will be violently rekindled again at a feast where both groups are present. The narrator of the poem likewise alludes to the fact that Heorot (Hrothgar's hall) will be burned by Ingeld's army (lines 82–5: Jack, *Beowulf*, p. 33). On the similarities between Ingeld's dilemma and that of the sons of Donn Désa, and connections between the *Togail* and Anglo-Saxon legend and literature, see P. L. Henry, *The Early English and Celtic Lyric* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), pp. 220–1, and the more detailed discussion by West, 'An Edition',

pp. 101–9. On the development of the Ingeld story see Kemp Malone, 'The Tale of Ingeld', in his *Studies in Heroic Legend and in Current Speech*, ed. Stefán Einarsson and Norman E. Eliason (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1959), pp. 1–62.

([58]) Paul Bibire, '*Beowulf*', in Jay Parini, ed., *British Writers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001), Supplement VI, 29–44, p. 37.

([59]) On this analogue, see chapters 9 and 10.

([60]) On the institution of fosterage, see Fergus Kelly, *A Guide*, pp. 86–90; Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 78–82; Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', pp. xix–xxiii and 1–38.

([61]) On multiple fosterage, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, p. 79; Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', pp. 7–8.

([62]) In lines 1094–5 Fer Rogain identifies two of Conaire's foster-fathers, Dris ('Bramble') and Sníthi ('Woven'). These may be the same as the two herdsmen who had fostered Mess Búachalla, and who had since been ennobled as Feidlimid Rechtaidi (line 102): their original, personal names were not mentioned earlier, and the name Sníthi is appropriate for one who brought up Mess Búachalla to become a good weaver and who wove a wicker house for her to live in (lines 78 and 80).

([63]) The *Togail* mentions seven sons altogether, but it lists only three of these as being raised with Conaire (giving rise to a potential inconsistency). There was some scholarly debate about the sons' names in Middle Irish literature (see, for example, Toner, 'Scribe and Text', pp. 116–17); the names vary, but the number seven remains constant. Some of these lists were printed and translated by Knott, *Togail*, pp. 72–4. For discussion, see West, 'An Edition', pp. 94–101; *eadem*, 'Genesis', pp. 421–2; and my forthcoming article 'Compilation as Creative Artistry'.

([64]) On the extent to which fosterage bonds united other members of the two kin-groups, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, p. 80; Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', p. 22. In the second list of sons of Donn Désa (lines 1187–90), Y,

D, F, and H2 all include five men, but U lists only four and does not include Fer Lé (line 7573).

(⁶⁵) Nettlau ('On the Irish Text', p. 251 [1891]) and West ('Genesis', pp. 416–17) have considered this feature to be a 'textual inconsistency'. However, the *Togail* contains several examples of different people bearing the same name.

(⁶⁶) This genealogy-collection is included in a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century manuscript preserved as part of the twelfth-century Book of Leinster (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1339), although because it is not part of the original Book of Leinster, it is not included in Best et al., *The Book of Leinster* (see ibid., I, xviii) or in the scans on Irish Script on Screen (www.isos.dias.ie). It is reproduced in Robert Atkinson, facs. ed., *The Book of Leinster: sometimes called The Book of Glendalough* (Dublin, 1880), second run of pages, p. 378, and the relevant section was printed by Knott (*Togail*, pp. 72–3 n. 113) and is discussed by West, 'An Edition', pp. 94–101.

(⁶⁷) On this proliferation-pattern, see the first section of chapter 5.

(⁶⁸) This epithet (with or without a length-mark on the 'i') seems to have been in common use. In the allegorical saga which Urard mac Coise tells about his own misfortunes in *Airec Memnan Uraird meic Coise*, he uses the name *Mael Milscothach* as a pseudonym for himself—an apt one, in view of the devious rhetorical stratagem which his saga represents. See Erich Poppe, 'Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory: The Lesson of *Airec Menman Uraird maic Coise*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 37 (Summer 1999), 33–54, pp. 44–6.

(⁶⁹) Ó Cathasaigh, 'The Concept of the Hero', p. 87; Borsje, 'Approaching Danger', p. 86; Eichhorn-Mulligan, '*Togail Bruidne Da Derga*', p. 11.

(⁷⁰) West, 'Genesis', pp. 428–32. Doublets of various kinds were identified in the *Togail* by Zimmer ('Keltische Studien') and subsequent scholars, but West ('An Edition', pp. 26–46; 'Genesis', pp. 428–32) has clarified the concept, distinguishing

between 'episodic doublets' (which disturb narrative continuity) and 'thematic doublets' (which do not).

(^{71}) This device is discussed in chapter 6. The classic study is Sims-Williams, 'Riddling Treatment', revised in *idem*, *Irish Influence*, pp. 95–133.

(^{72}) William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 65 (I.ii.207–9).

(^{73}) Closer to home is the description-and-identification sequence which opens the first recension of the *Táin* in which Medb eagerly anticipates the coming of Cormac Cond Loinges (Cecile O'Rahilly, *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I*, lines 10–20), although no 'bureaucratic' principle is violated in this example. This and analogous mediaeval instances are discussed by Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, pp. 307–8; Henry, *The Early English and Celtic Lyric*, pp. 219–20; and (in more detail) Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence*, pp. 97–9, who considers it to be only a distant relative of the 'watchman device' analysed in chapter 6 below.

(^{74}) Classicists have likewise long since granted the dramatic function of the description-and-identification passage in book 3 of the *Iliad* despite the 'bureaucratic' anomaly that King Priam of Troy here asks for the names of the Greek besiegers ten years after the Trojan War has started. See C. M. Bowra, *Tradition and Design in the Iliad* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 112; Michael Silk, *Homer: The Iliad* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 41; and further references in Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence*, pp. 99–100.

(^{75}) Y is the only text to include the semantically redundant word *indi* (it is absent from D, U, and E).

(^{76}) Knott prints these two words *i nnEmain* (line 485).

(^{77}) Lines 484–8. On the possible werewolvish significance of the epithet *luchthonn*, see Kim McCone, 'OIr. *Olc*, *Luch-* and IE *wĺkʷos*, *lúkʷos* "Wolf"', *Ériu*, 36 (1985), 171–6, pp. 175–6.

(^{78}) Literally, 'making this hand-clapping'.

(^{79}) Y's *Ní thuctha* is a passive form, which—since it does not make sense—I interpret as an error for the active form *ní tuca* ('may [God] not bring') found in the other texts, which are U, line 7008, D (MS, fol. 81r), and H2 (MS, p. 479).

(^{80}) Lines 593–4.

(^{81}) U has a similar acknowledgement to Fer Rogain's earlier comment just quoted (line 594): instead of *Is líach* it has *Is liach a orguin* ('Grievous is his destruction', line 7008). In D, by contrast, this phrase reads *Is liach a bith* ('Grievous is his life', MS, fol. 81r). H2 lacks the *Is líach* of line 594.

(^{82}) West, 'Genesis', p. 431, also discussed in my forthcoming article, 'Compilation as Creative Artistry'.

(^{83}) On the dramatic force of formal speech in legal contexts, see Robin Chapman Stacey, *Dark Speech: The Performance of Law in Early Ireland* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). On formal utterances more generally see Maurice Bloch, *Political Language and Oratory in Traditional Society* (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

(^{84}) Here U adds a further explanation about the cairn's function and an extra episode in which the sons of Donn Désa build a beacon (lines 7034–46). On the quasi-authorial control exerted by the plunderers over the story at this point, see Nagy, *Conversing with Angels*, pp. 293–4. On physical markers on the landscape in early Irish literature, see Rebecca Blustein, 'Poets and Pillars in *Cath Maige Tuired*', *CSANA Yearbook*, 6 (2007) (*Myth in Celtic Literatures*), 22–38.

(^{85}) Knott here added a length-mark to the *-a* in *Da*, not attested in Y (col. 726).

(^{86}) Y's reading confusingly amalgamates two name-forms for the Hostel variously preserved in texts of Recensions I and II: *Bruiden Da Derga* (D's reading at this point (MS, fol. 81v)) and *Bruden* [*h*]*uí Derga*[*e*] (the reading of U, line 7049, and H2 (MS, p. 479)).

(^{87}) For discussion of the title, see p. 35 and chapter 8, note 42.

(⁸⁸) U, rather touchingly, has *ar n-aiti uli* ('the foster-father of us all', line 7073).

(⁸⁹) Lines 666–8. This passage is present in Y (col. 726), U, D, H2 (p. 479.1), and E (fol. 22r).

(⁹⁰) For the variants on *a mac* see chapter 2, note 87.

(⁹¹) West, 'Genesis', p. 416; Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', pp. 44–5; Knott, *Togail*, p. 76. Gantz (*Early Irish Myths*, p. 67) follows this critical orthodoxy, 'correcting' the earlier passage to 'Let each man slay his son, but let my foster-brothers be spared', although he does not correct Fer Rogain's mirroring reference to his 'foster-father' (ibid., p. 79). For a possible explanation of the alleged confusion, see Charles-Edwards, '*Geis*', p. 43 note 40.

(⁹²) In teaching his talents to his foster-brothers, Conaire had provided them with specialized training. Basic education was a primary function of fosterage, and scholars usually demarcate it from specialized training received elsewhere: see Fergus Kelly, *A Guide*, p. 91. Boll, however, has pointed out ('Foster-Kin in Conflict', pp. 27–8) that legal and other sources do not clearly demarcate between these two kinds of training. But, whatever form it may have taken, such training was typically provided by the foster-parent (Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, p. 79). Conaire, then, seems to have been no ordinary foster-brother.

(⁹³) Boll, 'Foster-Kin in Conflict', p. 171.

(⁹⁴) Both speech-markers, *a Ingcél* and *fordat comaltai Conaire*, are absent from H2 (MS, p. 479.1), and the second is absent from E (MS, fol. 22r). It seems likely that the archetype included these speech-markers, but this is not certain.

(⁹⁵) Lines 659–61. Manuscript-texts as in note 89.

(⁹⁶) On this theme, see O'Leary, 'Choice and Consequence'.

(⁹⁷) O'Leary, 'Choice and Consequence', p. 52.

(^{98}) The difficulty of this concept for modern readers is reflected in Samuel Ferguson's verse retelling *Conary*. Ferguson seems to have found the idea of all three foster-brothers repudiating affection for piracy not merely repellent but implausible, and constructed different motivations for them: see his *Poems*, ed. Alfred Perceval Graves (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1916), pp. 204 and 206.

(^{99}) Their utterances add to the crescendo of fear built up by the narrative, examined in chapter 5.

(^{100}) For an Icelandic example, see the comment in *Bárðar saga*: *Töluðu þat sumir menn, at Gestr mundi fífla hana um vetrinn* ('Some people said Gestr would seduce her during the winter'), in Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, eds., *Harðar saga* (Reykjavik: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1991), p. 140. Such statements, always made in indirect speech, are almost always proved correct.

(^{101}) As mentioned above, D here has *in t-aes demna* 7 *uilc* ('the people of demons and of evil' (MS, fol. 81v)).

(^{102}) For a full analysis of this trope see Nagy, *Wisdom of the Outlaw* (especially pp. 52–8).

(^{103}) O'Leary, 'A Foreseeing Driver', p. 16, referring to the chariot of kingship mentioned in *Audacht Morainn* ('The Testament of Morann'), a text discussed in chapters 9–10.

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